



A Service of The City of Cincinnati

**GREATER CINCINNATI  
WATER WORKS**

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*For more information, go to [www.myGCWW.org](http://www.myGCWW.org).*

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - Prepare Your Pipes and Beat the Freeze**

**(Cincinnati)** – 'Tis' the season of snow and ice, chilly temperatures and some potentially frozen pipes and meters.

To help protect residents and business owners from the cost and headache of dealing with frozen pipes, Greater Cincinnati Water Works (GCWW) has a few helpful tips to help prepare for, and beat the freeze:

- **Protect outdoor pipes and faucets:** In some homes, the outside faucet has its own shut-off in the basement in addition to the shut-off valve for the entire house. If you have a separate valve for outside faucets, close the valve, remove hoses and drain the faucet. If you don't have a separate valve, wrap the outside faucets (hose bibs) in newspapers or rags covered with plastic.
- **Insulate indoor pipes or faucets in unheated areas:** Pipes in internal, unheated areas such as the garage or crawl space under the house should be wrapped with insulated foam to prevent freezing. Wrap the entire length of the exposed pipe and cover all valves and pipe fittings.
- **Close vents and doors:** Make sure basement and crawl space vents, windows and doors are closed tightly.
- **Seal cracks:** Caulk around door frames and windows to reduce incoming cold air. Drafts and overlooked openings can quickly freeze exposed water pipes.
- **Open cupboard doors in the kitchen and bathrooms:** Water lines supplying these rooms are frequently on outside walls. Leaving the doors open when the temperature is below freezing allows them to get more heat.
- **Let faucets drip in below-freezing weather:** This will help keep an even flow of water moving through your internal plumbing system and prevent freezing.

Dave Bennett, Field Services Manager for GCWW Distribution Division advises, "Exposed pipe should be insulated. Insulating foam is easy to use and can be found at your local hardware or building supply store," but he warns *against* using electrical heat tape. "Heat tape can be problematic because if it's used improperly it can potentially cause a fire."

If your pipes do freeze and you can pinpoint the location of the freeze, Bennett suggests waving a hairdryer back and forth to apply slow, steady heat to the entire length of pipe. "Applying heat to the overall area - not just one spot - will allow the pipe to slowly warm up and prevent it from bursting. Never use an open flame, which could cause a fire," he says.

As a condition of service GCWW customers are required to protect their **water meter** from being damaged. If the meter is underground, verify that the lid is not broken or missing. Unheated indoor meters should be protected with an easily-removable insulated box placed over the meter. If a water meter freezes and bursts there is a charge associated with replacing the meter and restoring water service.

"Below-freezing temperatures put a strain on your entire plumbing system," warns Jason Fleming, Superintendent of GCWW Distribution Division. "Especially when these temperatures last for an extended period of time -- this can weaken the whole system and cause breakdowns. Please take all the necessary precautions to avoid this potentially hazardous situation."

***Greater Cincinnati Water Works Department (GCWW) provides the highest-quality drinking water to more than 1.1 million people in parts of Hamilton, Butler, Warren and Clermont Counties in Ohio and Boone County, Kentucky.***